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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Martin Primary abandons its academy plan

The controversial plan to turn Martin Primary School into an academy, reported in our December issue, has been scrapped in the face of opposition from parents.

The proposal was that the school in Plane Tree Walk would become part of a multi-academy trust with Northside Primary School in North Finchley and Foulds School in High Barnet, with staff from all three schools playing a part in opening and running a new primary in Mill Hill.

Strong reaction

However, when the plan was announced in October, with a month set aside for consultation, there was a strong and immediate backlash from concerned parents.

They were worried that the ethos of Martin Primary would be damaged by becoming an academy, and that the administration of a new school outside East Finchley would be a huge drain on staff time and an unnecessary distraction in a year when Martin is already undergoing a major expansion programme to turn it into a three-form entry school.

Parents tell us there was a very heated meeting at the school in early December when they were able to voice their concerns in front of headteacher Helen Morrison and the board of governors. Staff were also given the opportunity to vote on the proposal and it is understood that the majority were against it.

Mrs Morrison had made it clear that she saw the academy plan as an exciting opportunity but would not press ahead with it if it did not have the support of parents. Following the consultation period, the school issued a letter to all parents and carers saying the idea was being abandoned.

Relief

Adam Fagan, a former governor at Martin, was one of those who opposed the academy plan. He said there was a feeling of relief now the deal was dead.

"People didn't like being sold something they didn't believe in," he said. "It was felt

that the leadership of the school weren't able to spell out the benefits to Martin Primary. It's one thing to work together with other local schools but another thing altogether to entangle Martin with two schools we didn't know anything about in a multi-academy trust."

Can we fix it? Yes!

A visit to www.barnet.fixmystreet.com resulted in a rapid response with a number of potholes in Cherry Tree Road being filled in within a couple of days. Try this Barnet Council website yourself, it seems to work.



Meet Rufus, our pet of the month. Turn to page 11 for our new regular feature.

Photo by Mike Coles

Pop-up shop for your ideas

East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) is a community project seeking to help residents start up and run projects which they feel would benefit the area and reduce isolation.

So far the team has several interest groups taking shape and would like to meet with you and hear your views. They will be hosting a 'pop-up shop' in the foyer of Finchley Youth Theatre, 142 High Road, on a number of dates this month.

Feel free to drop in to find out more about groups you might want to join, or leave

your ideas for what's needed in the area.

The pop-up shop dates are all week Monday 17 February to Friday 21 February from 10am to 2pm and Monday 24, Tuesday 25 and Thursday 27 February from 2pm to 6pm.

For more information or to ask any questions, go to www.efab.org.uk or call Lisa Smith on 07909 998453.

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